

## **SCHEV Guidelines for Transfer, Articulation, and Dual and Guaranteed Admission in the Commonwealth**

House Bill 57 and Senate Bill 538, passed by the 2006 Virginia General Assembly, direct the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to create guidelines for the development of transfer, articulation, and dual admission agreements between two- and four-year public institutions of higher education in Virginia. Per this directive, SCHEV called upon the expertise of the State Committee on Transfer and the Instructional Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC) to draft guidelines, in cooperation with SCHEV staff, that meet the intent of the legislation and also the needs of the citizens and institutions of the Commonwealth.

The legislation noted above, in combination with existing statutory obligations of SCHEV, served as the framework for the development of transfer and articulation guidelines. These guidelines are intended to construct a framework for an efficient and effective system of undergraduate transfer in the Commonwealth while recognizing the autonomy and legal authority of institutional Boards of Visitors in the admission of students. Some of these guidelines reflect provisions and policies previously set forth in the State Policy on College Transfer.

### **Guideline 1**

All qualified students in the Commonwealth who believe that they could benefit from a postsecondary education should have access to all levels of higher education. Two-year colleges are a point of access to higher education for a considerable portion of Virginia's population. Thus, a significant responsibility of every public four-year institution in the Commonwealth is the enrollment of two-year college students.

### **Guideline 2**

Transfer degrees offered by two-year colleges should be comprised of courses recognized as legitimate and equivalent to those offered at four-year institutions. SCHEV recognizes transfer degrees that are based on a baccalaureate-oriented sequence of courses. Recognized transfer degrees include the Associate of Arts, Associate of Science and the Associate of Arts and Science. Recognition of additional degrees by SCHEV may be granted following a substantive review by the State Committee on Transfer.

Two-year colleges are responsible for creating courses that are equivalent; four-year institutions are responsible for recognizing those courses that are equivalent. Therefore, students who have earned a recognized transfer associate degree should be considered to have met lower level general education requirements of public, four-year institutions. These students should be considered to have attained junior standing. It may, however, take transfer students longer than two years to complete a baccalaureate degree because of prerequisites in the major, or other requirements or circumstances.

### **Guideline 3**

All public, four-year institutions should provide transfer information in a manner that is easily available and clearly communicated to transfer students, faculty, and advisors (e.g. the institution's website). Specifically, institutions should make easily available to students, faculty, and advisors, current and consistent information on the transferability

of credit from transfer programs and courses offered by the two-year colleges, as well as information on program-specific requirements.

#### **Guideline 4**

Because articulation agreements are intended to further reduce the time-to-degree of associate degree holders by providing students with specific information on the transferability of programs and of courses within a given program, public, four-year institutions should develop articulation agreements with uniform application to all institutions within the Virginia Community College System and Richard Bland College. Articulation agreements should address the general education and program requirements of four-year institutions, and provide additional opportunities for qualified students to be admitted and enrolled.

#### **Guideline 5**

Institutions shall permit students to declare, in writing, their intent to transfer to a four-year public institution, per articulation agreements. Articulation agreements should further specify that students who complete an associate degree within four years of submitting a letter of intent to transfer and enroll at a four-year institution within 18 months of completing an associate degree shall have access to rights and privileges defined in applicable articulation agreements available at the time of the student's declaration.

#### **Guideline 6**

The development of guaranteed and dual admission agreements should provide Virginia's students with certainty in their plans to transfer seamlessly from a two-year college, to a public, four-year institution. Guaranteed admission agreements should permit students to develop qualifications at a two-year college, before receiving a transfer degree and transferring to a public, four-year institution. Dual admission agreements should permit students possessing the requisite qualifications to be simultaneously accepted by a two-year college and a four-year institution of higher education. Guaranteed admission and dual admission agreements should set forth the obligations of the student accepted in such programs, including grade point average requirements, acceptable associate degree majors, specific course requirements, and completion timetables. In addition, these agreements should outline the student's access to privileges of enrollment in both institutions during the time enrolled in either institution.

#### **Guideline 7**

Transfer, articulation, and admission agreements forged by two-year colleges and four-year institutions should include provisions for the collection and dissemination of student level data that enhances the efficiency of transfer. Further, transfer, articulation, and admission agreements should include provisions for the systematic review of the efficiency of the agreement.

#### **Guideline 8**

In accordance with the Code of Virginia, four-year institutions should submit transfer, articulation, and admission agreements to the State Council of Higher Education. The State Council of Higher Education shall make such information available to the public.

#### **Guideline 9**

Transfer admissions priority should be given to students who have completed a transfer degree over those who have not.

#### **Guideline 10**

Transfer students should have, to the extent possible, the same opportunities as native students of comparable standing in such areas as course selection, registration, access to campus housing, and financial aid.

#### **Guideline 11**

Each institution should designate a chief transfer officer who serves as point of contact for transfer-related communication. In addition, each college, school, or division within a four-year institution should designate a person with final authority on the transferability of courses in the majors contained in the college, school, or division. An institutional process for students to appeal decisions about transfer credits should be established and well publicized.